

## General Provisions

The Vermont Department of Corrections (hereinafter called DOC) is seeking an agreement with an individual, agency, or organization that can, independently, or in partnership with collaborators, assist the DOC in conducting a process and impact evaluation of the Second Chance Act Comprehensive Statewide Recidivism Reduction Program (SRR).

The SRR program was designed to help states take a systematic, sustainable approach to establishing policies and practices that will improve recidivism outcomes for a large portion of individuals released from prison to the community.

### Activities for this contract:

#### I. Strategy Evaluation:

Vermont identified multiple strategies for the SRR grant, each of which will be documented, monitored and evaluated to assess its impact once implemented. The evaluation contractor will work closely with project staff to plan for the data collection necessary to produce quality evaluations. Therefore, the chosen evaluator(s) should expect to actively engage in the project and contribute to the development of the program model.

Using a participatory evaluation process with an understanding of the Vermont law on accountability for population based results; the chosen strategies will be assessed by performance measures guided by the Results Based Accountability framework, more information can be found here:

<http://resultsaccountability.com/about/what-is-results-based-accountability/>.

Results Based Accountability asks three main questions: How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?

The following are the grant Strategies chosen by Vermont:

#### a. Develop a comprehensive and sustainable EPICs Program within the DOC

How much: measures to indicate the amount of effort conducted under this strategy

How well: measure to indicate the quality of the effort conducted under this strategy

Better off: Comparison of offender results between caseworkers trained in the EPICS model and those not trained.

Offender outcomes: such as: reduction in % of technical violations; decrease in % of offenders returning to incarceration; and other recidivism related data.

#### b. Review and update all policies and directives related to risk tools, case planning, sanctions and incentives, classification, and community supervision.

How much: measures to indicate the amount of effort conducted under this strategy

How well: measures to indicate the quality of the efforts conducted under this strategy.

Better off: Measure to assess if staff and partners perform new skills?

**c. Develop a robust training and development program for DOC, state agencies and community providers.**

How much: measures to indicate the amount of effort conducted under this strategy

How well: measure to indicate the quality of the effort conducted under this strategy

Better off: Do community partners have a better understanding of the principles of risk needs and responsivity? Are DOC staff and community partners performing new skills?

**d. Increase the quality assurance and implementation fidelity of risk reduction programs.**

How much: measures to indicate the quality of the effort conducted under this strategy

How well: measures of the quality of the effort conducted under this strategy

Better off: Improvement in program fidelity, Increase in staff skills.

**e. Create data sharing process to support integrated case management**

How much: measure to assess the amount of effort under this strategy

How well: measure to assess the quality of effort under this strategy

Better off: Integration of procedures; change in case management practices; improved data sharing

Offender Outcomes: Before/After or comparison study to assess: Increase % of offenders released at or near their minimum release date; Decrease % of offender returning to incarceration; Decrease in % of violations.

**f. Validate and norm the ORAS for the VT population**

This strategy is being conducted by the University of Cincinnati. Evaluators will help assess how well the DOC implemented the model.

**g. Provide sub-grants to local partners for civil legal aid.**

How much: measure to indicate the amount effort conducted under this strategy

How well: measures to indicate the quality of effort conducted under this strategy

Better off: Are individuals more stable due to the support they receive?

**Activities for strategy evaluation:**

1. Work with the SRR staff and Task Force stakeholders to develop a participatory evaluation plan. The SRR Task Force is comprised of DOC staff and staff from other departments within the Agency of Human Services, substance abuse and mental health treatment providers, police and court staff, and groups such as the United Way.
2. Work with the SRR staff and Task Force stakeholders to identify data elements and collection methods.
3. Work with the SRR team and Task Force stakeholders to evaluate the selected strategies to ensure the following questions are answered:

- a. How much did we do?
  - b. How well did we do it?
  - c. Is anyone better off?
4. Assess the impact of delivery system improvements on costs, quality and access of care versus the control group.

## **II. Recidivism reduction evaluation:**

The DOC will also contract with an evaluation partner to complete a recidivism study. This study will focus on two definitions of recidivism: 1) the ACT 41 definition- *The Department shall calculate the rate of recidivism based upon offenders who are sentenced to more than one year of incarceration who, after release from incarceration, return to prison within three years for a conviction for a new offense or a violation of supervision, and the new incarceration sentence or time served on the violation is at least 90 days;* 2) the intermediate definition for the purpose of the grant - *re-lodgings for 30+ days for sentenced inmates released to furlough supervision within the first year of release.*

Data sets will be provided by the Department of Corrections.

### **Criteria for scoring**

#### **1. Information from the Bidder**

- Describe the bidders experience and knowledge with the Results Based Accountability model.
- Describe the bidder's experience working with DOC or other government entities.
- Describe the bidder's experience compiling evidence based research on social services delivered to target populations; and applying this experience by evaluating and conducting comparative analysis of performance.
- Describe the bidder's experience conducting scientific research on social services delivered to target populations; and applying this experience by evaluating and conducting comparative analysis of performance.
- Describe the bidder's experience preparing research reports and analysis for use by academic and non-academic audiences.
- Demonstrate understanding of the major public systems that work with criminal justice involved populations.
- Demonstrate experience in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a variety of research designs including, but not limited to, quasi-experimental, non-experimental, and survey designs.
- Mere reiterations of the RFP's stated language are discouraged, as they do not provide insight into the bidder's understanding of the required tasks and responsibilities, nor the uniqueness of the bidder's performance capabilities.

#### **2. Bidder Capacity**

- Provide a description of the organizational structure of the bidder. Provide a staff organizational chart that identifies the major operational components of the organization, and the lines of authority and responsibility.
- Provide three examples of projects in which your agency has evaluated human services systems, program models and outcomes, data systems, and/or client models and processes. Include brief descriptions of the project scopes, timelines, contract amounts, source of funding, and type of client (e.g. government, nonprofit, for-profit).
- In this section of the Statements of Qualifications, provide the resumes of the key personnel (prime and/or sub consultant) for the areas of services required for this project/contract

### **3. Responsiveness to Specifications**

- Provide a description of how bidder will respond to program goals, a plan for the how the evaluation will be conducted, and how elements of the evaluation will include both qualitative and quantitative data. This section must describe the bidder's approach and plans for accomplishing the work outlines in the Scope of Work and Contractor Responsibilities. The narrative must demonstrate to the DOC an understanding of the process that is to be implemented, and persuade the DOC that the bidder understands the nature of the required work and the level of effort necessary to meet goals.
- Describe how the bidder will work with DOC and the SRR Task Force. Simple statements that a task will be completed or a reiteration of the RFP are not helpful. The bidder must describe how it will fulfill the responsibilities as they interface between DOC tasks and bidder's tasks. A summary of the problems the bidder might reasonably expect and its solution to those anticipated problems will be helpful here.
- Enough information must be provided so that the DOC is assured that the bidder will be prepared to establish fully effective and efficient operations on the contracts effective start date.

#### **Program Cost:**

Use the Schedule A: Budget Submittal Form to itemize your program costs.

#### **Contract period:**

The proposed contract period for the evaluation of the SRR will begin on 7/15/2015 and end on 7/15/2018. Funding for this evaluation is provided through the Second Chance Act Comprehensive Statewide Recidivism Reduction Program (SRR) grant to the State of Vermont.

#### **Single point of contact:**

**All communications concerning this Request for Proposal (RFP) are to be addressed in writing to the attention of: Monica Weeber**, Administrative Services Director, Vermont Department of Corrections, 103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671, [Monica.Weeber@state.vt.us](mailto:Monica.Weeber@state.vt.us); phone: 802.951.5057. This contact person will be the sole contact person for this proposal. Attempts by bidders to contact any other party could result in the rejection of their proposal.

**Reporting expectations:**

**Timeline:**

4/21 RFP posted

5/12 bidder's questions due

5/19 department responses submitted

5/20 closing date

5/21 bid opening

6/05 selection notification

7/15 commencement of contract